

## ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

# Croatian Enterprise Promotion (CEP)



USAID Croatia

*USAID funded a practicum for business consultants at the Lovas agriculture cooperative located in the Vukovar-Srijem county. Consultants conducted a feasibility study of four alternative investment projects. Based on comparative results, the cooperative voted to implement a project that will expand their existing dairy production, which will enhance their prominence in that market with both suppliers and buyers.*

Implementer: Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu

Partners: Croatian SMEs, Croatian BDS providers (consultants), Ministry of SMEs, Bankers Association, Croatian Employers Association, Association of Management Consultants

### **Project completed September 2004**

With trade barriers relaxing and global competition for markets heating up, Croatian private enterprises must compete head-to-head with international products in domestic markets and external markets. The program stimulated private enterprise productivity and profitability in Croatia by providing best practices business tools, access to international quality standards and quality certification to enterprises. CEP provided business development services to enterprises, with emphasis on small and medium enterprises (SMEs), through an independent network of trained and certified consultants that operate on a for-fee basis. It addressed inefficiencies in SME finance markets and other constraints to enterprise growth. USAID supported the 5000-member Croatian Employer's Association (HUP) in establishing a sustainable association for business consulting service providers to ensure quality standards for consultants. It also helped them to develop internationally-accredited certification programs for ISO quality management, marketing and financial cost control to improve access to domestic and export markets for Croatian SMEs.

**Results** Nine training courses in quality management, finance, marketing, human resources and consulting skills, featuring software-based tools, were prepared and tested based on widely accepted management and analytical techniques to assist consultants and clients to improve enterprise performance and competitiveness. More than 200 consultants have been trained. Ten instructors have been trained through a train-the-trainer program. Eleven practicum assignments, designed to provide enhanced training and positive operational performance impact to enterprises, were completed.

One of the most notable achievements was the establishment of a sustainable Association of Management Consultants (AMC) that ensures quality standards for consultants working to stimulate private enterprise productivity and profitability. The AMC has qualified business consultants to train and certify businesses in internationally-accredited standardization programs for ISO and Hazard Analysis of Critical Control Points (HACCP). The demand for these training services has averaged 175 paying participants per year for the last two years demonstrating their ability to effectively sell their services and earn revenue. Currently 375 consulting assignments per year can be attributed to consultants that have participated in the courses offered by the AMC.